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# *Tantilla alticola* (Boulenger, 1903) (Squamata: Colubridae): filling a geographical distribution gap in western Colombia

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**Abstract:** Based on a single specimen collected in La Delfina, municipality of Dagua, department of Valle del Cauca, we fills a record gap of 255 km in the distribution of the snake *Tantilla alticola* in western Colombia.

**Key words:** distribution, *Tantilla alticola*, Valle del Cauca, Colombia

*Tantilla* is a genus of snakes (Colubridae) with species distributed from North America to the north of Argentina, South America, in an altitudinal range that goes between 0 and 2,743 m above sea level [a.s.l.] (Uetz and Hošek 2014). This is one of the most diverse snake genera, composed by 64 species, surpassed only by *Atractus* with 135 species (Wilson 1982). In Colombia, the genus *Tantilla* is represented by five species (*T. alticola, T. melanocephala, T. nigra, T. reticulata* and *T. semicincta*) in the five natural regions of the country: Amazon, Andean, Caribbean, Orinoquía and Pacific (Pérez-Santos and Moreno 1988). *Tantilla alticola* (Boulenger, 1903) (Figure 1) is a known species in Colombia, Costa Rrica, Nicaragua and Panama, but lacks a continuous distribution (Wilson 1982; Myers et al. 2013). In Colombia this species has been recorded in the departments of Antioquia (Wilson 1982), Chocó (Castaño-M. et al. 2004), Risaralda and Nariño (Mueses-Cisneros and Cepeda-Quilindo 2006). Individuals of *T. alticola* exhibit semifossorial habits and live in rain and cloud forest between 91 and 2,743 m a.s.l. (Wilson 1982; Savage 2002; Myers et al. 2013). This species has the greatest altitudinal distribution of the genus (Uetz and Hošek 2014).

On 12 October 2010 we collected an individual of *T. alticola* at La Delfina, municipality of Dagua, along the road between Cali and Buenaventura, department of Valle del Cauca, western Colombia (03°48′03.97″ N, 076°46′45.54″ W, 350 m a.l.s.; Figure 2). Species identification was based on the diagnosis of Wilson (1982) and Savage (2002): 128 ventral scales; 20+ subcaudals (the specimen lacks most of the tail), the absence of a loreal scale, six infralabial scales and smooth dorsal scales. In life the individual had a red venter, a dark brown overall body color, a beige distinct nuchal band with a slightly clear posterior border, a clear spot in the anterior region of the eye on the supralabial scales followed by a dark section below the eye, and a clear spot behind the eye (see figure 1). The specimen (male, snout–vent length = 81 mm, tail length = 92 mm) was deposited in the Herpetological collection of the Universidad Nariño (PSO-CZ 488).

Our new report is 133 km of the nearest historic locality record (Figure 2) and fills a gap of 455 km in the distribution of the species in southwestern Colombia. This record is also

**Figure 1.** Collected specimen of *Tantilla alticola* from Valle del Cauca department, Colombia.

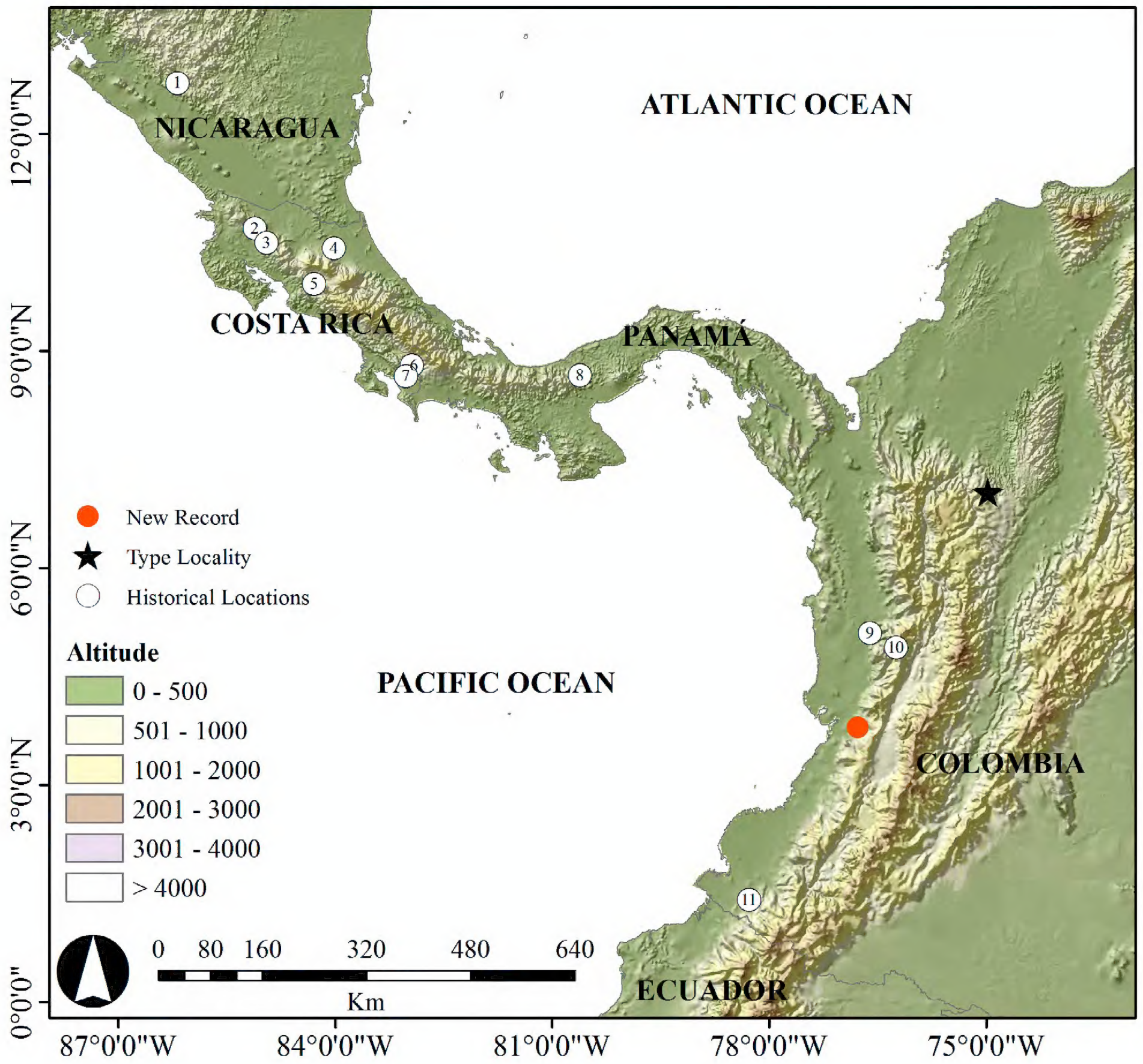


**Figure 2.** Geographic distribution of *Tantilla alticola*. The black star indicates the type locality (BMNH 1946.1.6.63-65, Antioquia, Colombia), black circles historical records: 1, 2, 7. Estimated from Wilson (1986) (Myers et al. 2013); 3. LACM 147598, Guanacaste, Costa Rica; 4. LACM 147597, Heredia, Costa Rica; 5. KU 30995, Cartago, Costa Rica; 6. LACM 125561, Puntarenas, Costa Rica; 8. Coclé, Panamá; 9. BMNH 1946.1.8.83-84 - BMNH 1913.11.12.60-61, Condoto, Chocó, Colombia 10. San José del Palmar, Chocó, Colombia; 11. ICN 10857, Nariño, Colombia. The red circle indicates the new record from La Delfina, municipality of Dagua, along road between Cali and Buenaventura, department of Valle del Cauca, western Colombia Valle del Cauca, Colombia.

the first time the species has been found in the department of Valle del Cauca. *Tantilla melanocephala* also is present in the department of Valle del Cauca (Castro-Herrera and Vargas-Salinas 2008; Cardona-Botero et al. 2013), but *T. alticola* was recognized by differences in color pattern and the number of infralabial scales: six in *T. alticola* versus seven in *T. melanocephala* (Wilson and Mena 1980).

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